



# Individualized Format Readability: The Messy Research Processes of Educational Technologies

Inside UAZ-Funded Scholarship

March 31, 2023

10:00am – 11:00am



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# Land Acknowledgement



Individualized Format Readability: The Messy Research  
Processes of Educational Technologies



# Event Introduction



**Guadalupe (Guada) Lozano**

Director, Center for University Education Scholarship (CUES)  
Director, External Relations & Evaluation School of Mathematical Sciences  
Associate Research Professor of Mathematics

**Individualized Format Readability: The Messy Research Processes of Educational Technologies**



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# Speaker & Panelists



**Shelley Rodrigo**

**CUES Distinguished Fellow**

Senior Director, Writing Program  
Graduate Faculty, Rhetoric, Composition,  
& the Teaching of English  
Associate Writing Specialist  
College of Social & Behavioral Sciences



**Bethany Brooks Harrison**

Undergraduate Researcher, Department of English  
College of Social & Behavioral Sciences



**Anuj Gupta**

Ph.D. Student, Rhetoric, Composition & the Teaching of English  
College of Social & Behavioral Sciences



**Rick Treitman**

Entrepreneur-in-Residence, Adobe

**Individualized Format Readability: The Messy Research  
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# I did say "Messy"

- We're in the Middle!
- Messy Topic
- Messy Angle
- Pandemic & Methods
- Data & Analysis



# Messy Topic

Reading can be very hard if the text is small.  
Small text is often used to test your near vision acuity.  
But it turns that it also effects reading speed and comprehension.  
Adjusting the text size, character spacing, and line spacing  
can have a dramatic effect on your reading ability.



## Font

Reading can be very hard if the text is small.  
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# Size

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# Line Height

Reading can be very hard if the text is small.

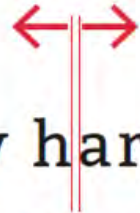


Small text is often used to test your near vision acuity.

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## Character Spacing



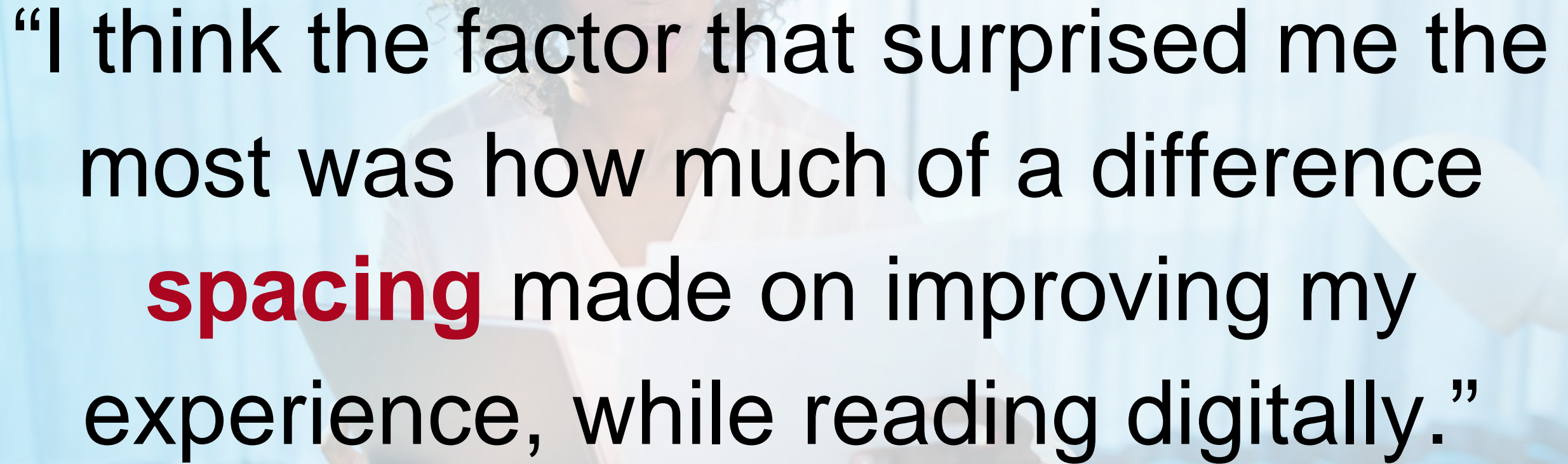
Reading can be very hard if the text is small.

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“I think the factor that surprised me the most was how much of a difference **spacing** made on improving my experience, while reading digitally.”

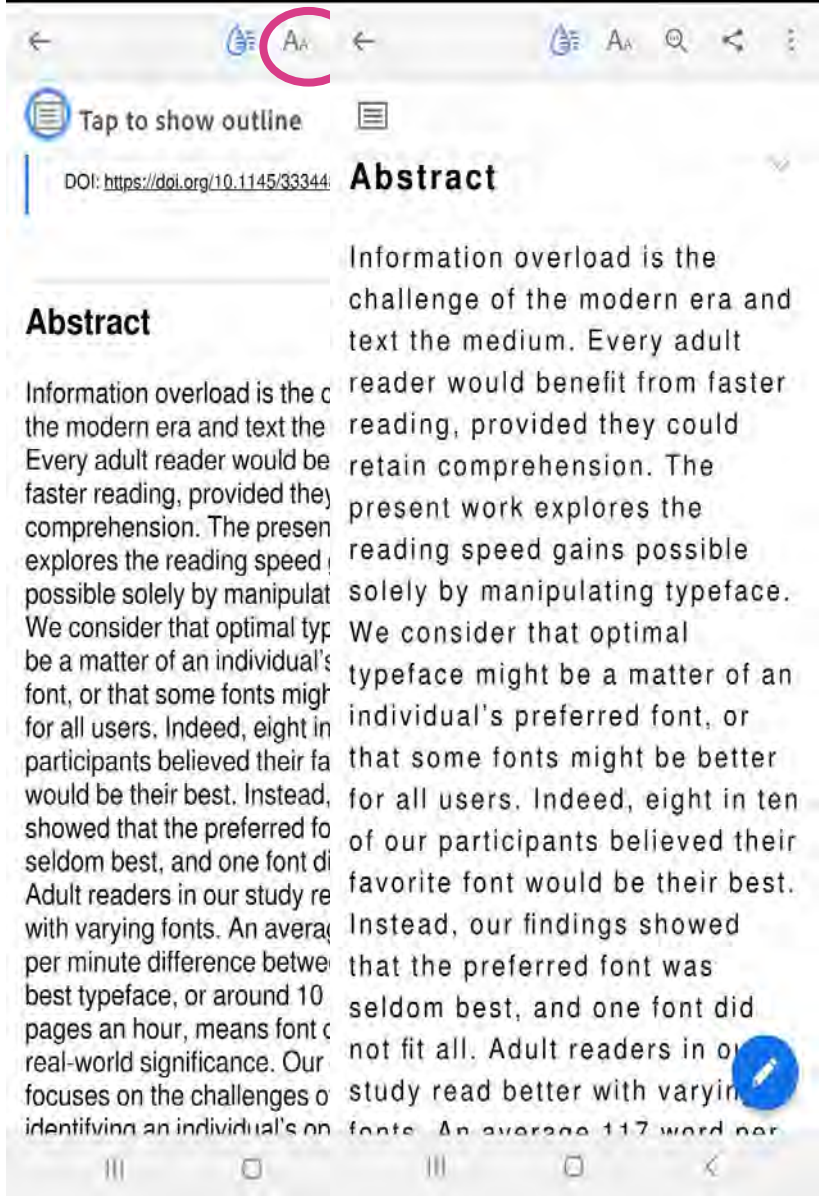
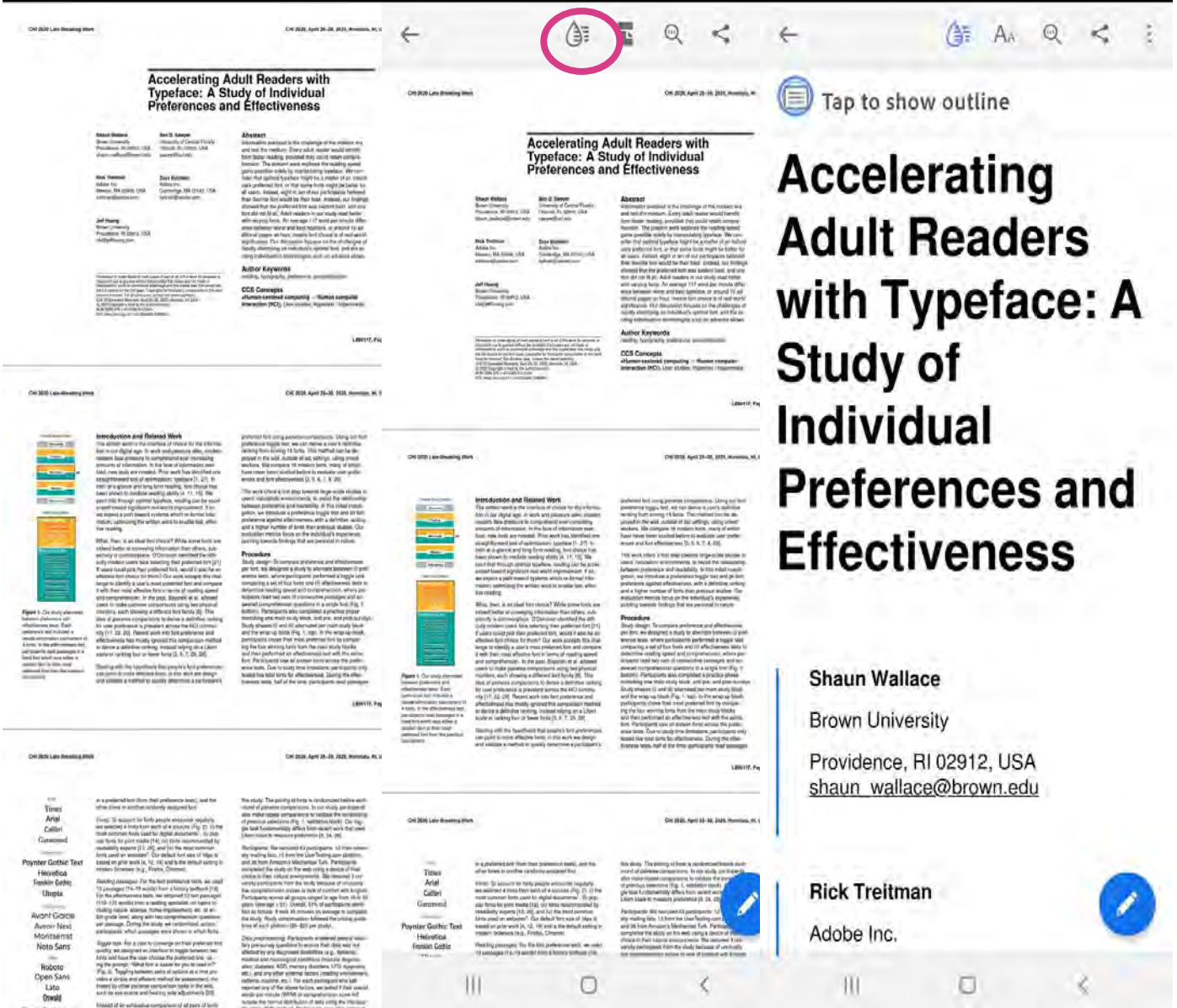
# Messy Topic: Digital Readability Research

Personalized Reading  
Formats are  
Individualized



"The Visual Device Will Laugh" (CC BY-NC 2.0) by Kat Northern Lights Man





# Accelerating Adult Readers with Typeface: A Study of Individual Preferences and Effectiveness

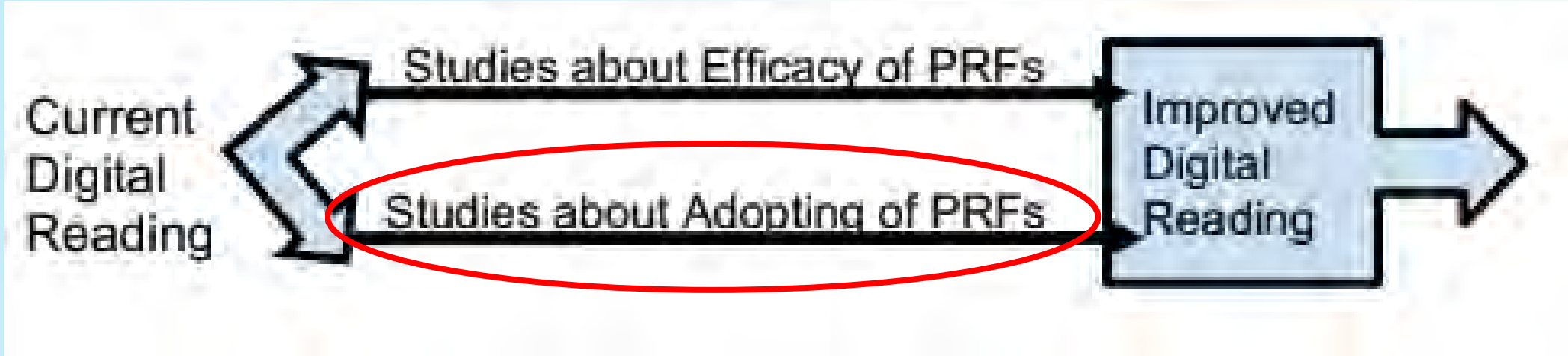
Shaun Wallace  
Brown University  
Providence, RI 02912, USA  
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Rick Treitman  
Adobe Inc.

## Individualized Format Readability: The Missing Research Processes of Educational Technologies



# Messy Angle



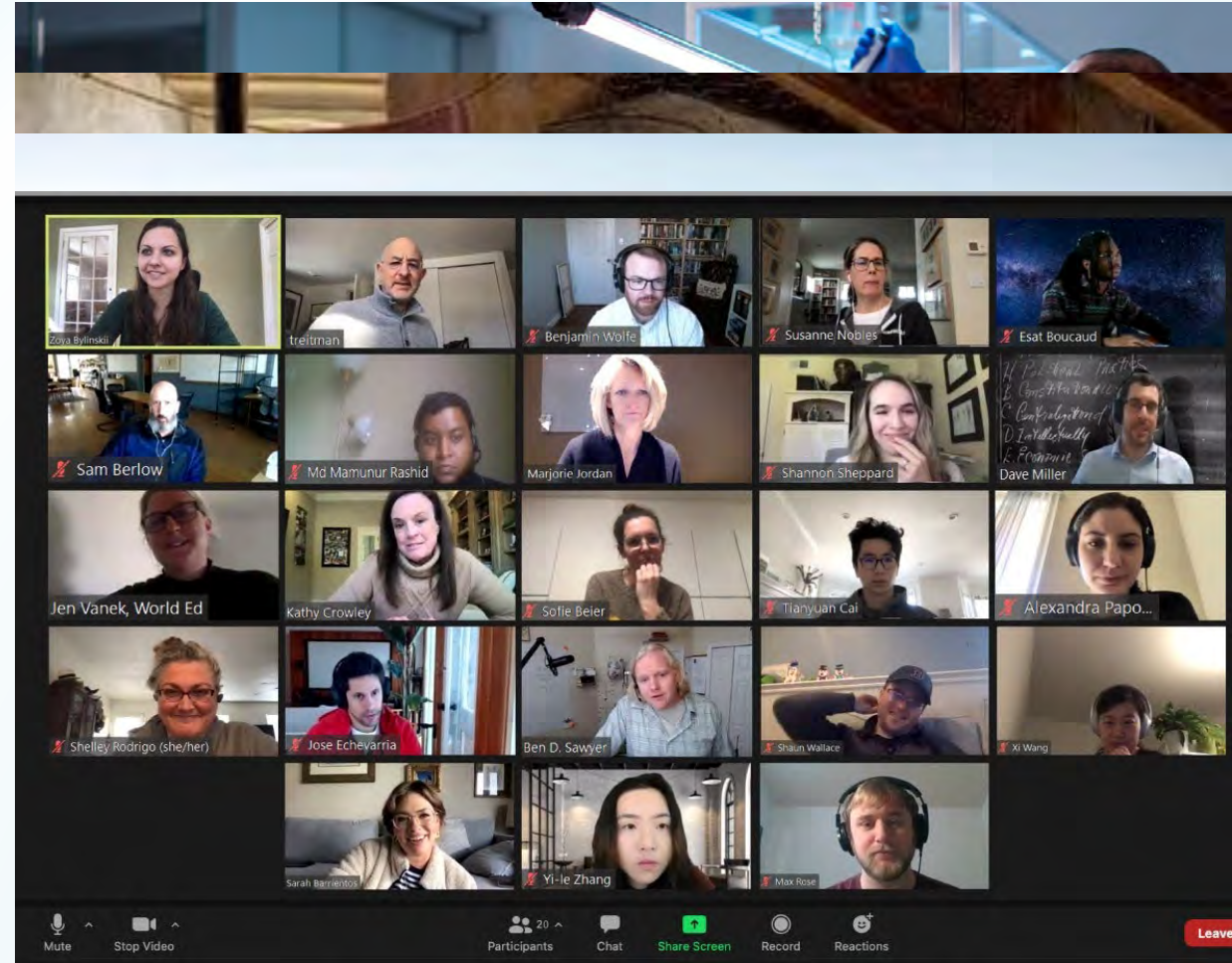
## CUES Research Questions

- 1) How do faculty experience prompting students to learn about and use their personalized reading preferences?
- 2) How do students experience choice-making tools available through digital textbook environments?
- 3) How do decisions around those tools impact their reading practices, adaptation of technologies, and sense of efficacy?



# Messy Methods

- Bookstore
- Faculty
- Students
- **Pandemic**
- Intervention Technology
- Research Instruments
- Quantitative Analysis



The Poor Poet, painted by Carl Spitzweg in 1839. Photograph: Leemage/Corbis; grabbed from [The Guardian](#)

# Cleaning is Better with Others



Individualized Format Readability: The Messy Research Processes of Educational Technologies





**Rochelle (Shelley) Rodrigo**  
**Senior Director,**  
**Writing Program,**  
**University of Arizona**



**UArizona Team:**

**Aimee Mapes, Anh Dang, Anna  
Leach, Anuj Gupta, Bethany  
Harrison, Catherine Brooks, Jack  
Clark, Kevin Ginosian, Sallie  
Koenig**



A Zoom meeting grid with 20 participants. The participants are arranged in a 4x5 grid. The control bar at the bottom includes: Mute, Stop Video, Participants (20), Chat, Share Screen, Record, Reactions, and Leave.

Zoya Bylinski	treitman	Benjamin Wolfe	Susanne Nobles	Esat Boucaud
Sam Berlow	Md Mamunur Rashid	Marjorie Jordan	Shannon Sheppard	Dave Miller
Jen Vanek, World Ed	Kathy Crowley	Sofie Beier	Tianyuan Cai	Alexandra Papo...
Shelley Rodrigo (she/her)	Jose Echevarria	Ben D. Sawyer	Shaun Wallace	Xi Wang
Sarah Barrientos	Yi-le Zhang	Max Rose		



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# Individualized Format Readability: The Messy Research Processes of Educational Technologies



# Anuj's Reflections

## Lessons from Pilot Implementation

**1) Ecological, multidimensional frameworks necessary to understand impact of AI educational technologies:**

- cognition
- affective
- behavioral
- social
- environmental

# Anuj's Reflections

## Lessons from Pilot Implementation

### 2) Mixed methods, multi-phase approaches ideal for this:

- **Data Collection**

- field intervention, not lab (activity packet)
- survey
  - quant- VRL results, NASA task load
  - qual -UX + Rhet-Comp constructs
- diary study (detailed student experiences of implementation)
- focus groups (faculty experiences of implementation)

- **Data Analysis**

- Qualitative: multi-rater coding,
- Quantitative: descriptive, correlations, regressions



# Anuj's Reflections

## Lessons from Pilot Implementation

**3) Multidisciplinary teams enable this work and lead to interesting tangential research:**

- **Research design constructs:**

- Information Science
- Education
- Writing Studies
- Applied Linguistics

- **Tangential projects**

- annotated bib for WPAs,
- research on “reading anxiety”,
- team collaboration etc.

# Bethany's Reflections

## Lessons preparing for CUES

- **Multidisciplinary teams enhance research in the digital humanities:** equitability, accessibility, interdisciplinary thinking
- **Review of literature and secondary research require flexibility:** 30+ articles regarding emotions and embodiment in reading, humanities impact, the "idea gradient"
- **Revising survey instruments:** reading is personal, experience vs. confidence vs. comfortability, distinguishing between leisure, work, and school

# Fresh Data...remember, it's Messy

## Ease/Difficulty of Set Up & Reading

	Mean (average)	Median (middle #)	Mode (most common #)
How successful setting up (successful = high score)	16.38	18	21
How hard setting up (easy = low score)	4.83	3	1
How successful reading	16.65	18	18
How hard reading	7.13	7	11

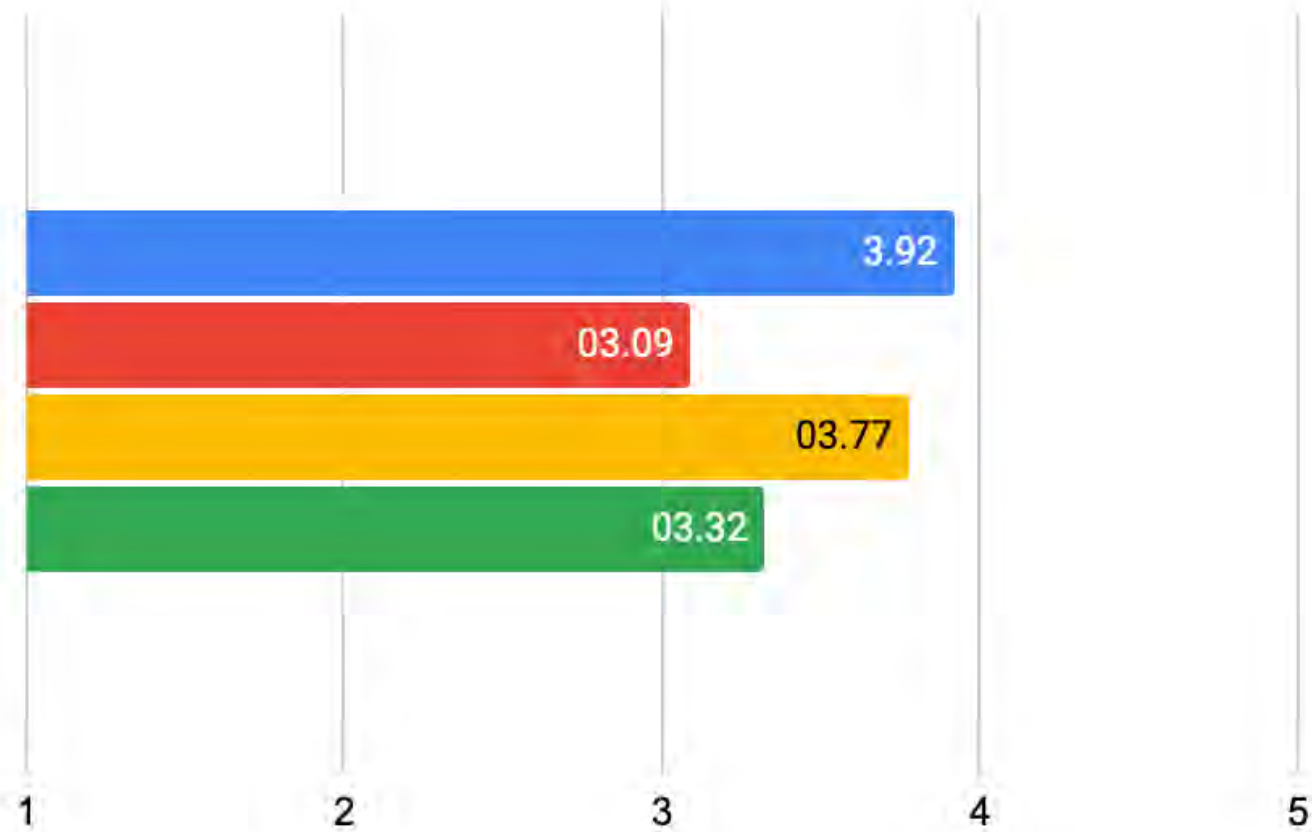
Nasa Task Load Index: answers on a scale of 1 (very low) to 21 (very high)



# Personalized Reading Format made reading:

n=24

- Easy
- Enjoyable
- Efficient
- Meaningful



Average; scale 1-5 (very negative to very positive)

# When reflecting on their reading experiences using their Personalized Reading Format...

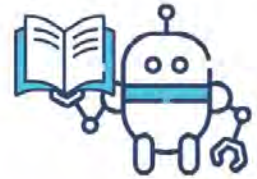
- surprised at positive impact
- distinguished between impact of format vs content
- eye strain
- speed/efficiency
- emotion (e.g, calm, less boring, enjoyed)
- *didn't notice difference*





# Rick's Reflection

## Perspectives on Working with Academics



Virtual Readability Lab

We study how personalization can make your reading faster and more efficient



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Proceedings of the International Symposium on Human Factors and Ergonomics in Health Care

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Journal Indexing & Metrics

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**Optimizing Electronic Health Records Through Readability**

Rachel V. Ball, Dave B. Miller, Shaun Wallace, more... Show all authors

First Published July 22, 2021 Research Article <https://doi.org/10.1177/2327857921101028>

Article information

HFES'21

ABSTRACT

**Accelerating Adult Readers with Typeface: A Study of Individual Preferences and Effectiveness**

Authors: Shaun Wallace, Rick Treitman, Jeff Huang, Ben D. Sawyer, Zoya Bylinskii

CHI EA '20: Extended Abstracts of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems • April 2020 • Pages 1–9 • <https://doi.org/10.1145/3334480.3382985>

Published: 25 April 2020

164

ABSTRACT

Information overload is the challenge of the modern era and text the medium. Every adult reader would benefit from faster reading, provided they could retain comprehension. The present work explores the reading speed gains possible solely by manipulating typeface. We consider that optimal typeface might be a matter of an individual's preferred font, or that some fonts might be better for all users. Indeed, eight in ten of our participants believed their favorite font would be their best. Instead, our findings showed that the preferred font was seldom best, and one font did not fit all. Adult readers in our study read better with varying fonts. An average 117 word per minute difference between worst and best typeface, or around 10 additional pages an hour, means font choice is of real-world significance. Our discussion focuses on the challenges of rapidly identifying an individual's optimal font, and the exciting individuation technologies such an advance allows.

CHI EA'20

Abstract

Medical professionals engage in an enormous and ever-increasing amount of reading of Electronic Health Records (EHRs), which may have adverse impacts on patient care. Personalized fonts may help to accelerate reading these records, without training, and without adverse effects on comprehension in this critical task. Using History of Present Illness (HPI) reports, we investigated how personalized fonts impacted medical text reading speed and comprehension. Sixty medical workers without medical training read a set of eighth-grade level passages in six different fonts, their fastest and slowest fonts, which were then used to display a set of HPI reports. Results showed that PRFs accelerated reading of medical text while maintaining comprehension. This finding suggests that individualized fonts, specifically font optimization, may be a straightforward way to optimize EHRs for the future in which PRFs may help physicians in reading medical information, and for investigating PRF impacts on medical professionals' EHR reading.

Vision Sciences Society Annual Meeting Abstract | October 2020

**Individual Differences in Font Preference & Effectiveness as Applied to Interlude Reading in the Digital Age**

Shaun Wallace; Rick Treitman; Nirmal Kumawat; Kathleen Arpin; Jeff Huang; Ben Sawyer; Zoya Bylinskii

Journal of Vision October 2020, Vol.20, 412. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1167/jov.20.11.412>

ABSTRACT

In the age of pervasive reading on digital devices, incredible opportunities for customized interfaces abound. We consider how personalizing body text font can improve reading outcomes for adult readers. We present results of large-scale Interlude Reading experiments run on 386 crowdsourced participants, whereby we tested 16 body text fonts and measured impacts on font preference and reading speed. We define "Interlude Reading," nestled between glanceable and long-form reading, as the form of reading that occurs in short interludes and is common in the mobile context. Our studies controlled for participants' interest and familiarity with reading passages, familiarity with font families, and font size - via a perceptually-based font size normalization technique. While past work has considered how these factors affect reading in isolation, we present the first study that combines these factors under a single experimental methodology. First, our results show that

VSS'20



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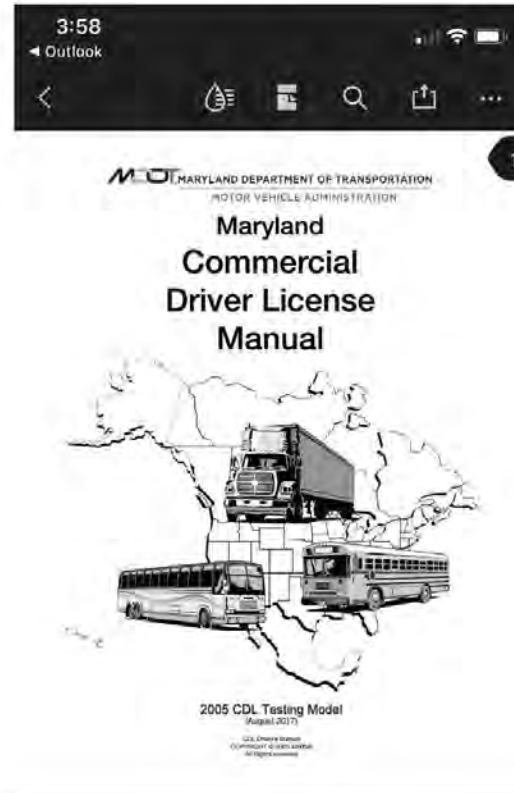


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# Individualized Format Readability: The Messy Research Processes of Educational Technologies



### Section 1 INTRODUCTION

**This Section Covers**

- Commercial Driver License Tests
- Medical Requirements
- Driver Disqualifications
- Other Safety Rules
- International Registration Program

There is a reference requirement that each driver take minimum standards for the licensing of commercial drivers.

This manual provides driver license testing information for drivers who wish to have a commercial driver license (CDL). This manual does not provide information on all the federal and state requirements required before you can drive a commercial motor vehicle (CMV). You may have to contact your state driver licensing authority for additional information.

You must have a CDL to operate:

- Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 pounds or more.
- A combination vehicle with a gross combination weight rating (GCWR) of 26,001 or more pounds, or a gross weight of 10,000 pounds.
- A vehicle designed to transport 16 or more passengers (including the driver).

Any bus vehicle which requires hazardous material placards or is carrying hazardous liquid or gaseous liquid or bulk in 49 CFR part 173, Federal regulations through the Department of Homeland Security, require a background check and fingerprinting for the hazardous materials endorsement. Contact your local department of driver licensing for more information.

(Your state may have additional restrictions of CMV.)

**CDL Classifications**

The CDL, whose classifications are based on the type of vehicle, license with the type of cargo to be transported, determines what type of CDL, license and endorsement an applicant must apply for. These are three basic vehicle classes as follows:

**Class A - Combination Vehicles.** Any combination of vehicles with a gross combination weight rating (GCWR) of 26,001 or more pounds falls in Class A provided the GVWR of the vehicles being towed is more than 10,000 pounds. Most Class A vehicles are trucks with at least two trailers, such as tractor-trailer units and tanker combinations. Tractor-trailer units may be found in a few communities. Driving a Class A vehicle requires considerable motor and aptitude that driving vehicles in Classes B and C. Some states include those required to drive a B and C vehicle as long as you have a Class A license and not those vehicles in Classes B and C.

**Class B - Heavy Straight Vehicles.** Any single vehicle with a GVWR of 26,001 or more pounds falls in Class B, or any such vehicle towing another vehicle not in excess of 10,000 pounds GVWR. Class B includes straight trucks and large buses, including articulated buses. Some driving these heavy vehicles requires considerable motor knowledge and skill that driving the small trucks and buses found in Class C. Some may require the skills required to drive Class C vehicles, always when such qualified for a Class B vehicle that also drive vehicles in Class C.

**Class C - Small Vehicles.** Any single vehicle with a GVWR less than 26,001 pounds falls in Class C, or any such vehicle towing another vehicle not in excess of 10,000 pounds GVWR. Vehicles in this class are 1) designed to carry 16 or more passengers including the driver, or 2) used to transport hazardous materials in quantities requiring placards under the Hazardous Materials Regulations (49 CFR Part 172, Subpart F), or 3) carrying material used in an amount in excess of 42 CFR part 172.

There are a great variety of vehicles in Class C. Some other large Class C vehicles may require more skill and knowledge to operate than do the smaller ones. However, the Federal category is based primarily on the type of cargo carried. Because of the placement of an additional hazardous materials endorsement on human passengers, the safe operation of such the smaller vehicles in Class C requires specific knowledge and the drivers of these vehicles must have a CDL.

**STATE OPTIONS:** Some states may decide to include other and vehicles in their CDL programs. For example, in some states, a CDL may be required for buses designed to carry more than 16 passengers. Check your state's Department of Transportation for the state will need to decide what category of vehicles to be included, or decide a non-hazardous.

**CDL Endorsements & Restrictions**

**Endorsements**

All commercial drivers who drive certain types of vehicles or haul certain types of cargo must add endorsements to their CDL. Some states' Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP) to show that they have the theoretical knowledge required for these operations. There are six levels of CDL endorsements that may be required, depending on the version or type of cargo.

**NOTE:** The only endorsements that may be added to a Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP) are:

- Passenger (P)
- School bus (S) and
- Tank vehicle (N)

**Double and Triple Trailers (T).** Many drivers who are qualified to drive Class A vehicles may wish to add double or triple trailers. Research shows that considerable additional knowledge and skill is necessary to safely add double and triple trailers in various traffic conditions and to maintain proper clearance, adding the additional skills.

**Hazardous Materials (H)** Any driver, operator, or the vehicle Class (Class A, B, or C) who wishes to haul any material that has been designated as hazardous under 49 U.S.C. 17102 and is required to be placarded under subpart F of 49 CFR part 172, or any quantity of a material listed as a select agent or toxin in 49 CFR part 179, must add a hazardous materials endorsement to their CDL. This requires passing a special written examination or test to recognize hazards and transport hazardous materials.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the US Department of Transportation (DOT) are required to conduct background checks on commercial drivers who are required to transport hazardous materials. (Background checks include a review of criminal, immigration and FBI records. If the driver is required a security threat, TSA will not issue a license and the driver will not be reinstated until approved.)

**Combination Hazardous Materials and Tank Vehicle (N)** Drivers of tank vehicles who haul hazardous materials or wish to transport hazardous materials must add an endorsement to their CDL. This requires passing the hazardous materials test by passing the written and





INFORMATION FOR THE COM...

## FOREWORD

In 1986, the Congress of the United States passed the **Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act**. This Act requires the states to adopt uniform minimum licensing and testing standards for drivers of commercial motor vehicles. By April 1, 1992, all drivers of commercial vehicles needed a Commercial Driver's License. Maryland's Commercial Driver's License Program became effective January 1, 1990. This was the beginning of a new era that resulted in each commercial driver to be looked upon as a professional.

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☰ 2.10.3 – What You Should Do ...

driving and road  
rage?

5. What should you do when confronted with an aggressive driver?
6. What are some things you can do to reduce your stress before and while you drive?

These questions may be on the test. If you can't answer them all, re-read subsections and 2.10.



Placeholder for New York Times image connected to the Malawi HIV+ Project.

Image may be referenced at:





## Malawi HIV+ Project

- 1200 Case Workers
- Deploy to remote villages with information packs
- Needs assessment
- Focus Groups before and after pilot
- Measured results



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# Malawi HIV+ Project



USAID ICYD Activity

## HIV- AND GBV-CENTERED CASE MANAGEMENT: Job Aids for PSWs

A reference pack to help Social Workers and PSWs improve HIV treatment and resilience outcomes for OVC under the USAID ICYD Activity



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A1. KULIMBIKITSA KUYEZETSA MAGAZI KU HIV KWA BANJA LONSE

- Kuyezeta ana magazi kumabandaa komaka moyo wa mwana. A ni okwama ibhela afa kumwala amabhe sira akwi ngwi siwazambisa kumwa mankhwala otalika moyo. Njira yokhayo yobandaa mwana kuti abhale ndi moyo mbwino komanso natika ndi kuonetsetsa kuti ayambile kumwa mankhwala mwachanga.
- Kuyezeta ndi kachilombo ka HIV sinathero a moyo. Njira yokhayo imene ana kapera akulu angabandakirire godandira mankhwala otalika moyo ndipamene ayambile akuyezeta kuti adabwe ngwi mthupi mwawo mu kachilombo ka HIV. Pamene mwana wazambisa mankhwala amabhe, moyo wake wabwino obwino komanso wathero. Kuyezeta magazi ndi njira yoyambirira. Ngati mwana wani wayezetse, adalikhwe pa mankhwala otalika moyo pokusa kuti akule ndi moyo wa thana ndi coagula. Mwana wote s amakula ngwi ana eni alivote.
- Kuyezeta magazi ndi chintu choyenera ndi chofunika kwa inu komanso ayenera gubwino jama. Mingo izoyenera kuti mwana akuyezese kuyezetse magazi ake, achiyamba komanso akulu akulu akuyezetse kuti ayezese magazi awo kugubisa izabo ana onse a m'banjano. Munthu ayenera amene a ja droopazo chotanga kachilombo ka HIV akuyezera kuti ayezetse kuti zinachitika kuti moyo wa ana anu komanso moyo wani uhalile padzimaliro. Kawavwani wa chipaso chotanga kachilombo ka HIV amabandaa kuti tidabwe ngwi mthupi yenera kuyezetse mwachangumotero mudzalundira kaye uphanga kenako mazayezetsewa ngwi mui ndi kachilombo ka HIV. Ngati magazetse kuti kuti mui ndi kachilombo, mudzagabidwa mankhwala otalika moyo kuti mbwino ndi thana. Kuyezeta magazi ndi zovo kofunika kwambiri pa moyo wenu ndi apa tanje lenu.

*\*Note to assessor: use Tool HIV Risk Assessment (Annex 17)*

*\*Note to assessor: following the administration of the HIV Risk Assessment tool, make referral for testing if needed, and ask if the caregiver would like to be accompanied to the visit.*

A2. KUFUNIKA KWA KUMWA MANKHWALA MOYENERA KOMANSO MWANDONDOMEKO

- Hlanhla mwanafana kuti na ARV angawira nthu bwanji komanso ndi dikubwa chani munthu amene amawira mankhwala ayenera komanso sira k'lonse, m'lingo woyezetse, pang'ani yak'ngalaha n'nyu akupeza bwino.
- Cholinga cha kumwa mankhwala ama ARV moyenera ndi kuchepetse kachilombo kwa izilombo za HIV komanso kujezera chitetezo cha mthupi. Ubwino womwa mankhwala mwanadondomeko nawu.
  - Munthu amakula wambiri komanso amabheledwira.
  - Tizilombo za HIV zipakira kuswarakwambiri.
  - Planu yemwe amawira mankhwala amabhe ledwira bwino mchiro s'izaliko.
  - Kuchepetse chinywaji cha mwanamwanzaka komanso kuzalika kwa kwake.
- Njira yokhayo imene inathandiza kuti na ARV agwira bwino mthupi ni shup ni pamene akuyezese mankhwala komanso ndondomeko komanso mawavungu. Munthu amawira mankhwala modzila kapera kuti akwazeregero cha izilombo za HIV mthupi imwe chinywazalululuzo.
- Shapapipi kuti mwana amwenyankhwala molondola komanso moadikuzo komanso anhu onwe akumwala mwanamwanzaka komanso mwanamwanzaka komanso kuti amwe mankhwala moyenera ndi kwakona.



A1. PROMOTING HIV TESTING FOR CHILDREN AND CAREGIVERS

A1. PROMOTING HIV TESTING FOR CHILDREN AND CAREGIVERS

- Testing infants and children while they are very young is lifesaving. Without treatment, more than half of infants and young children with HIV will die before reaching their second birthday. However, starting treatment early is very effective and is the best way to keep children healthy.
- Testing positive for HIV is not a death sentence. In fact, it is the opposite. Testing is what will allow babies and children to get lifesaving treatment if they need it. With treatment, infants and children can grow up to live healthy and normal lives. Testing is the first step. If your child tests positive, he/she will be put on

A1. KULIMBIKITSA KUYEZETSA MAGAZI KU HIV KWA BANJA LONSE

A1. KULIMBIKITSA KUYEZETSA MAGAZI KU HIV KWA BANJA LONSE

A2. KUFUNIKA KWA KUMWA MANKHWALA MOYENERA KOMANSO MWANDONDOMEKO

- Nkutheka mumadzifunsa kuti ma ARV amagwira ntchito bwanji komanso ndi chifukwa chani munthu amene akumwa mankhwalawa ayenera kumwa tsiku lirilonse, mulingo woyenera, panthawi yake ngakhale munthu akupeza bwino.
- Cholinga cha kumwa mankhwala ama ARV moyenera ndi kuchepetsa kuchuluka kwa tizilombo za HIV komanso kuonjezera chitetezo cha mthupi. Ubwino womwa mankhwala mwanadondomeko nawu:
  - Munthu amakhala





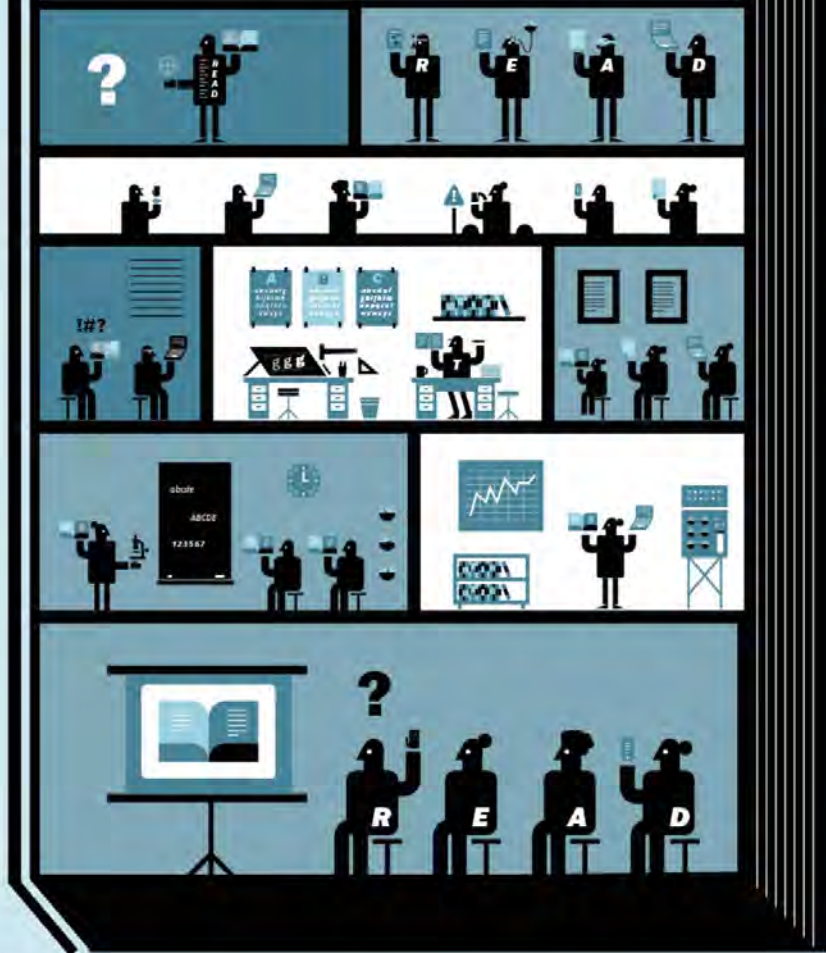
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**READABILITY**  
**CONSORTIUM**

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## Readability Research: An Interdisciplinary Approach



- *Foundations & Trends Human-Computer Interaction*
- December 12, 2022
- 28 Authors
- 126 pages



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# The Readability Consortium

- Research
- Tools
- Data sets
- Community



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# The Readability Consortium

A personalized reading format across all reading surfaces enabling everyone to read their best.



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NEW PERSONAL  
REABABILITY TESTS

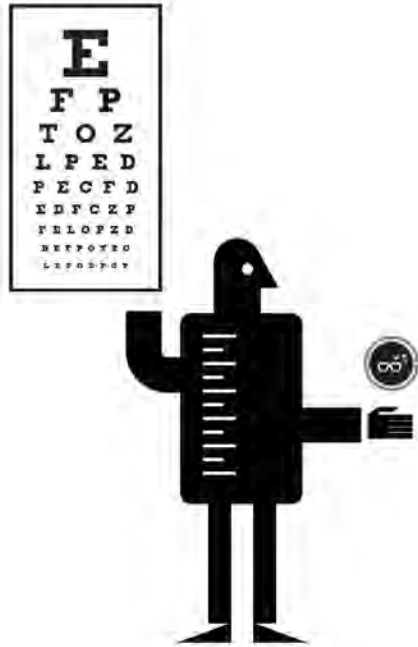




NEW PERSONAL  
REABABILITY TESTS



NEW PERSONAL  
REABABILITY TESTS



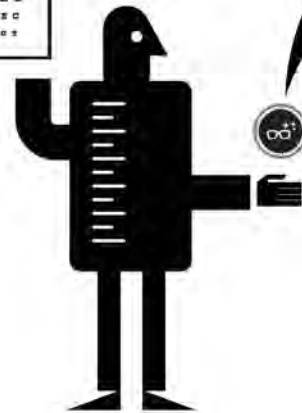
NEW PERSONAL  
REABABILITY TESTS



PERSONAL READING  
RX TOKEN



NEW PERSONAL  
REABABILITY TESTS



PERSONAL READING  
RX TOKEN

EVERY READING  
SURFACE





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# Shelley's Reflection Messy Works!

- Research Adv. Grants: Accelerate for Success
- Undergraduate Research Partnership Faculty Challenge Grants
- CUES **Fellows Learning Community (FeLC)**



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# Q&A with Panel



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